
Black Expressions



DECEMBER 1973 \$1.00

*For Black students scattered
throughout the colleges and
universities of America; for
the Black incarcerated; the
Black youth; the Black aged;
and for the Black grassroots
wherever they may be.*

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BLACK EXPRESSIONS

CORRECTION

The poem "A Passing Face" was erroneously credited to Ms. Jull Malveaux,
when in fact it is the work of Ms. Ingrid Treeth.

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EDITOR'S NOTE

Black Expressions is the first attempt by Black students at Northeastern University -- most notably members of The Onyx Staff -- to produce a magazine of poetry that speaks, in particular, to the 30 million, or so, Black people in America.

It is our pleasure to acknowledge the support given this magazine by Black students at N. U., who submitted poems and offered many helpful suggestions.

Further, we are indebted to the many beautiful brothers and sisters, in and around Boston, who also submitted their work to us for consideration. Our only regret is that because of limited space all of the poetry could not be used.

Finally special thanks goes to Bob Gittens, for all the photography; Joyce Clarke, who handled the correspondence; Edward Fleming, who drew the graphics; and Doris Cruthird, who designed the cover.

Ted Thomas



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Black Expressions



Would that we were one of the few
blessed with the gift to see beyond
today and past tomorrow
to be able to say for sure and not
just perhaps of the outcome of
things we plan, hope and dream today
But only wait and regret the knowledge
that plans are often altered and never
fulfilled
What then is the future to be determined
by, to be built on, perhaps only the
fantasies of our minds - called hopes
and dreams

Jean Singleton

To all young, gifted and black people

Expectations are so high
and reality is a painful bitch
but dream dreams
and hope hope
work
and may they be/come/be/utifully.

I be/lieve in me
 in we
 in us
in our collective dream
and I/me/we/us be workin', so dog gone hard
 all day 'n' night.

then some young white bastard who don't understand
 won't understand
 can't understand
'cause the system their white bastard forefathers
 created and "they" support
 GET'S IN OUR WAY!

We deal and deal
just like mommy and daddy and nanny and papa
deal/dealt/still be dealin'
 dig?

but I/we be hurtin'
'cause the young white bastard makes us work double shift
earnin' single day pay.

I'm so tired
 so tired
Jesus Lord, so tired

Ya'll help me thru today.

"they" -- everyone who plays with power for its own sake and ego.

Pat Bowen

ALL THAT I HAVE

is thirteen useless pennies

At Two o'clock in the morning. The stores have
been closed for hours along the avenue.

Prostitutes and junkies die in night-kissed corners,
by strangers' sewers
and powered poison

Burglar alarms cry out like yuletide bells
while niggers dressed like christmas trees
go dashing through the snow

My pocket bleeds a lonely cent.
It spills on a brown-stained corner of the sidewalk
and rolls into an empty Miller Highlife can.

Aluminum lip prints whisper advice through a
drop of beer.

All that I have left.
 is a dozen such pieces of life.
.....and another pair of shoes, back home.

Gregg Powell

FOLLOW YOURSELF

I woke up long before the dawn of everything
and followed my own footprints down to the beach.
I knew I was somebody yesterday.
Nobody would have left no traces.

There was an awesome feeling near the ocean.
Powerful.... merciless.
Feeding on the rocks,
 while they stood like Masochist fools.

I watched until the ocean ran thin along the sand
towards my feet.
It caked the mud between my toes, and held it
there for whiles,
 then sizzled backwards to the sea.

As I turned homeward myself,
 those new footprints were deeper.

Perhaps I wouldn't lose myself tomorrow,
if today's mudcaked souls
should turn to dusty feet.

Gregg Powell

I GOT TO BE ME

You don't want me to love myself
You want me to hate myself
You want me to be a woman
A woman of another race.

I got to be me, baby
Myself and I
I don't want to be like a woman
A woman opposite of me
A white woman
I got to be me
And I love you, baby
And I want you to be my man
My beautiful blackman

So you see
I was born into this world
Belonging to the black race
Not a white race
I got to be a woman
A black woman
I got to be me

Barbara and Marsha Jackson

You Tried ...

to imagine
What it's like without a love
A black love
A tall, dark and handsome love
Someone who will push back the tears
And bring out the laughter
A love that will stick by you
When you don't have anybody else.
He'll be there.

Julie Knox

THIS IS ME

Good times, good times
Always out to have a good time
because this is me.

To find someone to walk the
streets with, to talk to, to
release every ounce of love
to, to understand me the way
I am.

Out to find a Black man who
is willing to cope with my
many faces and moods.
Moods that change like the wind,
change like the seasons. Changes,
going through changes always
until I seek that person
who can deal with what is
happening to me. This is
all I ask because this is
me.

Me, a Black woman searching
for something more than
a temporary flaring of
feelings. I need more than that.
I want a more
permanent high of love.
Inject me with love and
let it flow through every
part of me. I can't expect
less because this is me.

Let me show you what I
have to give.
Give, give love, give under-
standing, give companionship,
Give good times, give me.
This is all I have to offer
because...

This is me

Jeanne Simpson

TO A SISTER I SAW/OR REMINISCING
(For Doris)

I remember you... sister.
You were young and we played together
On the banks of the Congo.
I still remember how
The cool evening sun shone bright on your dark skin.
How good the breeze felt
As you and me walked along secret paths
That led us to secret places.
How nature and you and me formed a perfect triangle
And the morning sun that woke us up
Smiled a warm and natural smile.

I remember you... sister.
Working side by side with me
In the southern cotton fields.
Toiling and sweating and dying inside
The Congo had dried up and
The sun was cold.
I still remember when you were taken from me
And violated by the beast
Slowly our triangle became a square

I remember you... sister.
Looking for a job and finding one
And now the hands that used to kiss the Congo
Was dipped into dish water.
The knees that used to kneel in the soft grass

Was now kneeling on a hardwood floor.
I still remember you bringing home the money
And me
With no job
Planning the budget.

I remember you... sister
Standing by the bus stop with your dashiki dress on
African beads and natural hair
Watching me walk by you
With a college education - money in my pocket and a white g

*"But in my blindness, I have found my sight, because I have
decided to remember. And looking into a dark past sometime
produces light."*

So, I remember you... sister.
I saw you again, a few minutes ago
I smiled as you passed by and said
"Hello ... sister"
You smiled back and said
"... Hello"
I wanted to stop you and ask
Sister have you forgotten me?
Do you ever reminisce?
Do you ever think back to the time when?
But I didn't have to
Because your clear dark eyes have already told me
Brother... I remember you too.

Ted Thomas



MASS CONFUSION

ariotinnewarkdetroitwattsorboston
studentunrestatbrandeiscolumbiaorcaliforniastate
draftcardburningsinthestreets
marchesforintergrationonthewhitehouseelav. n
angryprotestersagainstnixon'sbullshitdecisions
hippieandyippiemovementsincentralpark
arsonistsgoingwildincities
lootingofbuildingsshootings
theconstantwhineofthepolicepaddywagon
muggingsrapeillegaluseofdrugssthe wail of the ambulance
acrisisbetweenblackandwhitelawandorderlawandjustice
why cantwelivetogetherisitconceivable
willthesethingseverstopstopstopstopstopstopstopstopstop

Roxanne E. Hazelwood

JAMMIN'

Yeah man, we jammed,
everybody was there.
Finger-poppin' and greasing back
and gettin' high!
So much smoke, almos' choked
and the little orange pill gave me the chills.
The room started spinnin',
The lights started flashin'
Then you had to come swimmin' by.
I then knew that I was blind.
Hey where's my wine?
Started sinking, eyes stopped blinking,
mind stopped thinking.
Heart..... ceased..... beating.....

Roxanne E. Hazelwood

GOING TO THE REVOLUTION

My old man asked what
he should wear
to the Revolution.

I told him to be cool
and lay off his
suede Sultans.

Then he asked if there
was anything
he could bring.

I told him, bring your
mind,
soul,
and Blackness.
E. Annette Hazelwood



reflection/war!!!

this is a poem
for george
and angela
and attica
for malcolm/martin/medgar
for little girls in pink ribbons
and alabama churches
for blackLIFE
blackLIFE is cheap

u cried niggas
when malcolm/martin/medgar
george
died
u cried niggas
but black TEARS is cheap
u know
blackTEARS/blackTEARS/blackLIFE
is cheap
the revolution
is over
no one flings
angry rhetoric
anymore
we've packed away our guns
and grenades
for another day
the revolution
is over
sit down/
count your casualties
who died/
the revolution is over --
all of the warriors
have either died
or absconded
BLACKLIFE is cheap

the revolution is
over
n we still
cryin/dyin'
livin
niggas live
while u can
blackLIFE is cheap

the revolution
is over
but the war
has been
happenin
forever
it ain't over yet

so cry
them cheap
do-nothin blackTEARS
the beautiful/beautiful tears
u cry
every time somebody dies
yeah cry
them cheap
do-nothin blackTEARS
cry
for angela/attica/george
malcolm/martin/medgar/
for all the other
deaths
n casualties
cry.
but don't forget:
if the revolution
is over
the war ain't
blackLIFE is cheap
n huntin season's still on
N U MAY BE NEXT
U MAY BE NEXT
U MAY BE NEXT

Juli Malveaux

INSANE

People know that
 Scissors
 Are
The
 New Weapon.
 Where?
But Where? does that
 leave all the
 Mirrors? Or
The sane?
 or the superman of
Winters when
 Spring Re-Groups.

Ha Ha
 All you ghosts & images
 Not Dreams
 O never
 Dreamers.
All of the unfinished
Reality
 Incomplete-yet
Too Full
 Ha Ha
Cry
 Later
 John Reavis 3

HERE

You are
Sitting at Home in
The Ghettoes (surprised?)
Of the World on an
American Saturday nite &/
Mission Impossible is on the Eye/O

Those old American
Must-Dos.
What a Frontier! One
by One knocked out by
reality punches much too
often -- once too often - This
is the dream - This
is the Nightmare

John Reavis 3

Children.

on the Subways--
 Freed. By
Symbols. Not just another
of the Crusades...
 Simply -- one more
Religious
 War. As
History Won't leave us
Alone. And there's no room for
 Tattletales -- Who's
listening?

John Reavis 3



for peaches

simply, sweet and smooth.
i would like to say
so many nice things
but when thinkin' 'bout
peaches
i think she be
simply, sweet and smooth
and ya jus know
peaches gonna stay that way.

And peaches is
never out of season.

Hey world-----
check peaches out!

Pat Bowen

SISTER WOMAN

(for Pat Bowen, Pam Cross, Jackie Lee, Debbie T. -
one of the strongest unions in the country)

sister strength is
writing poems now
(was writin' a long time ago
but it takes some of us a
long time to get hip to it)

sister strength is matting
words that
 move/on/paper
and dance (ethnic style) to the wind.

i can dig it
yeah/cuz/i/know
been/known
 what she means

words of hurt'n
ain't no new thing
for sisters to write/speak/cry/laugh/scream
but
i like silence-
that's my peace. and most of my sisters
dig it also.

Hey! Brothers, when you
gonna tighten up
her thing/my thing
need some sweet
silence/ some night rythms
that caress our moons

been running off
at the mouth too long/ya'll
come on now
getittogether/gitittogether/getittogether
yr actions/always spoke/
LOUDER/than yr/ words
to me.
can't you hear/?/ I
hear.

sister strength, yeah/I/hear/you/too/clearly
hear/your pain, your screaming/
sobs
Touch your mama/sister/me
sisters been holding each/othas
pain for quite a while
It's no new thing.

hey now!
 gotta find me an angel.....

NO THIS COULDN'T HAPPEN TO ME

*I think of her and all other thoughts give way
my eyes feast upon her
and every dark cloud becomes transparent to a sunny blue sky
she smiles and my heart flutters with an ever increasing motion.*

*it could be love
but to love is to care affectionately
and what I feel is more*

*I could be crazy about her
but to be crazy is to be irrationally emotional
and I must be rational if I am to approach her*

*but, alas, my mind must put my heart to rest
and maybe tomorrow
my thought shall become a reality.*

p.s. sweet dreams.

Dave O. Squires

3 AM

*The thought demands salt to the stained face
For life crumbles once again with pain
Witnessing the gravest fear, that of self-failure,
Knowing that endless periods of the same
Will bleed deeper into memories.*

I realize why stairs to heaven are so crowded

*Why? Love is the happiness of man?
Pain is the lesser level?*

*This wound is a result of one, ending in the other
God, deliver satisfaction,
There has been heartache, blood; enough.*

I see, I smile...

With a final hope, a dream, at last.

*Leering back, - you know -- ignore
Assuring that there is no room for self-pity
Nor for this love flushed in red.*

Lester Payne



63

Like my father's father
I sing the blues
Even though I never saw him
I hear his song every day

I sing the blues..... I sing the blues
The song echos through my head
From morn till night

And each day that passes
I understand more why he sang the blues
And each day that passes
I know why... I know the words of his song

Even though I never saw him
I know his song by heart

I sing the blues..... I sing the blues
They won't let me go back home
So I sing the blues..... I sing the blues

I know his song by heart
Even though I never saw him

Carl Griffin

Laughin/Lovin

Some folks just don't understand what I be
grinning about/ a lot/ sometimes.

Well...

happy is...

Your brown/blackness

"lovin me"

in every sense of THAT phrase.

happy is...

you confiding in me

what

you never would anyone else.

happy is...

your chess, "mate" and "check-mate"

teachin me

what you are about

and me

gettin deeper into you.

I want to laugh/aloud/ sometimes,

but I giggle instead (little girl)

'cause

it's a woman's kind of

little girl/I'm filled to over-flowing

cup

of

love

for

you

I

be

bearing

and your name rests safely on my lips

and your passion etched forever in my mind.

Yvette Battle

A MEETING

Woke up this morning
To face today
I'm finished mourning
Dreams of yesterday

No more can I hold on
To memories of yesterday
Changing; My heart awakes
To face a new face.

A new face to forget
Passing by too soon
Praying there is no regret
Singing my song out of tune.

Ingrid Freeth

A PASSING FACE

Take my hand and try
We have met for a while
Say nothing more don't cry
Just remember my smile

Our eyes unite to caress
You're just a passing face
Wishing you all the happiness
Changing time will erase

So please close the door
All I ask is to be....
Just a fading memory
Just that and nothing more

Juli Malveaux

untitled . . .

i'm tangled in
a web of u
it was comfortable once
but u'll have to go
now
yr web is choking/choking
me
n u're forcing the tears
that i once gave freely
cuz now i want
to save them
for later...

Juli Malveaux



making luv man wo man
 emotions on the rise funk sweat bodies
 rhythm rise fall hands glide sen-sa-tion
 excitement movement up down up down up down up down
 mouths meet tongues touch
 bodies move closer back arches and lips part
 mounting sensa tion turns to pleaa sure

 bodies gasp tremble mouths move words flow
 more more more more
 movement bodies pace quickens
 up down up down up down
 in out in out in out
 pleasure mounts pace quickened
 mouths enclose on tounges ajoined
 pleasure mounts excitement on the rise
 coming slower coming
 yes luvv
 mounting pleasure
 reaches CLIMAXXXXXX

bodies tremble hands moving sensations flow
 pace breathing slows
 muscles ease
 enjoy enjoyment
 and luvd luvving remain.

Dee Satterthwaite

Larry Greene

IN REMEMBRANCE OF MAMA SALLY 1890-1973

*Is what I'm doing now
What you hoped I'd be doing
When you used to lock yourself
In the closet to pray -*

*To him...
Who made all men
Out of the same dirt?*

*Whispered words that only
I could hear while
Wondering what his great design
For me was and*

*For you who ruined your
Eyes reading the bible
And the labels on
Campbell soup cans.*

*To me
Who tried to swallow both
In one gulp
Or to walk on the bathwater
Susie left.*

*Are you doing now
What you hoped you'd be doing?
After too much caring
Left an empty crust*

*Dressed in white
That everyone believed
Was you.*

*Except me.
And him-
Who was probably peeping
Out of the closet*

At you.

Ted Thomas



QUEEN MOTHER OF RHYTHM

yr e/very word
sharpes & flats
augmenting & diminishing
with intent.
eyes dancing
the dance of flirtation
flitting; like a 16th note
fluttering; like an alicia trane rhythm
then, hovering; like that moment
of silence between
act & reaction
i listen to yr hands;
drumming silent beats
upon each other in
an/ti/ci/pa/tion
African Music Woman
i receive yr
never ending concert of
creative giving
i wish to join
our rhythms in a
duet of love/song--
& perfect harmony.

Insan

NO. 61

Dream on nigger
That's all the man gives you
A dream for better tomorrows
In place of all your troubled yesterdays

Dream on nigger
For better jobs, big cars, fast women, good clothes and schools
Dream on nigger
Because other things aren't important

It's the only thing you can have
And not have at the same time
I dream too nigger..... Dig that
I dream of all the things I have and had
and realize..... I have nothing more than
What the man wants me to have
And that leaves me with nothing
Dream on nigger

You say you can't sleep Boy... Well here's the Bill of Rights
It's always helped your people to sleep and dream
You can't sleep either Son.....
Well I think I have something for you... yes try this
The Constitution..... it hasn't failed before
Dream on nigger..... dream on
If that's all you have

I dream too..... yes I dream too
But my pill isn't red, white and blue
It's black green and red.... It doesn't put me to sleep
It wakes me up... it shows me what dreams have done to me
So if you must dream..... nigger
At least take the right pill
Change the man's dream on
To the peoples..... right on
The peoples right on..... the peoples

Carl Griffin

NO. 2

I need something
Don't know what
Yes I do.....
Tired of telling people... very tired
Must think I'm crazy
Why???

Because I can understand myself
Do you
Know
What makes you do things
What makes you say things
Makes you wear a mask
Blank faces
Seems like they
Always end up destroying themselves
Under the cover of night
Can't see
Don't really care
So I guess it's alright
Won't happen again..... mask is showing
How high is up?

Try to talk.... instead I write
Someone in my mirror
Looked like me
Could have been
Next time I see him
I'll ask
Be a slave to the mask
If you must.... if you must
Everyone sees the truth
Or at least
I do
How wet is water?

Try to talk
Instead I write.....

Carl Griffin

GEOCIDE

*WHAT ARE YOU?
YOU RIDE IN BIG PRETTY CARS.
YOU GOT A BIG FINE SISTER.
ARE YOU SUPER FLY?*

*HAVE YOU FORGOT WHO YOUR BROTHER IS?
WHAT KIND OF ANIMAL ARE YOU
WHAT ARE YOU?
THAT YOU CAN SELL DOPE TO YOU BROTHER
TAKING THEIR LAST BREATH OF HOPE*

*ARE YOU A PIMP?
YOU GOT YOUR OWN SISTER
HUSTLING HER BODY
SO YOU CAN GET HIGH*

*ARE YOU THE GEOCIDE?
OF THE BLACKMAN OR
ARE YOU AS YOUR WHITE BROTHER PUT IT
THEIR NIGGER.....*

Edward Fleming

PRODUCTS IN SOUTH AFRICA

labeled by the white man
as grocery items in stores
stamped and developed by Polaroid
I. D. numbers distinct to note,
name of 'product .. quality, good
or bad; expires.....
year.....
day.....
month.....
exclusive bathrooms "niggers only"
area 'prohibited' to "Blacks"
distinctions made - nigger, coloured or white
niggers.... poor 'products' of advantageous
preference.
whites.... exclusive owners and buyers of 'products'
constantly checking to make sure of their 'products'
performance; paying averages of \$8 per month.
profiting endlessly, the 'africaans' our
"white brothers" of the century.
unlimited discounts still to supply till the
year 2000 even if we die.
beware Afro-Americans of the Africaans the
white 'consumers' of South Africa.

Courtney Russell

FOR THE KING

You told me
soft and sweet
and real easy
"I love you"
which took me by surprise
'cause I hadn't heard it
or felt it
in oh so long
'cause he's so very far away
and
a spirit is only something you can
hold on to
for (snap) so long.

"I love you"
surprised me
'cause it was coming from
you
and all you wanted from
me
was to do you a favor.

Without second thoughts or the "proper English" please
-- which I always demanded --
I pleased you.

And I guess you be wondering why
I be so picky/bitchy/frustrated
and you be wondering why
I be worrying so--
'bout the people I love.

It's 'cause
he didn't give
all I needed in return

Yes
"I love you"
is hard to come by these days

But King,
you said it
soft and sweet
and real easy

You love me?
you won't ab/use me.
use me good.
And without the "proper English" please
I will continue to
please you.

You see.
"I love you"
And I'm sayin' it
soft and sweet
and real easy.

Yeah, free.

Pat Bowen



THIS IS A POEM FOR DREAMS

this is a poem
for dreams
yours 'n mine 'n
our dreams of
touching the moonbeams
and lovin in the starlight.

this is a poem
about dreams that
kiss the sky and keep/on/pushing/UP
from there.
it is a poem 'bout needin' /an/receivin'
and not waiting for a rainy day-
about realizing our tomorrows.

Turn my dream poem
into a chant
"it's a new day—
now/let's/find/a/better/way"

Turn it into a
Goodvibe blimp
and ride it through Harlem
with the message flying.

Change it into a street walk
and swagger it through the
Newland.

Yeah. this is a dream poem
changing into a new song
listen.

I know we
can make it

Brothers, if you play the music
all the sisters will get up and dance.

Mina

as a child it is wait until you grow up before
you find out why a clock ticks why a baby is
born in a womb why the sea has waves and why
there is
death

the army was hurry up and wait for lines for
loneliness for food for pay for pain for
death

as a young man in love it is wait until you
are ready for her to be ready for you for you
to be ready to do for her while all the time
is passing by and perhaps by and to
death

the man prevails though and has been impatient.
and has grown up to that final wait and is
ready for her and ready to do for her and ready
for answers and still he hears wait i'm not
ready

wait wait wait
death.

Larry Greene

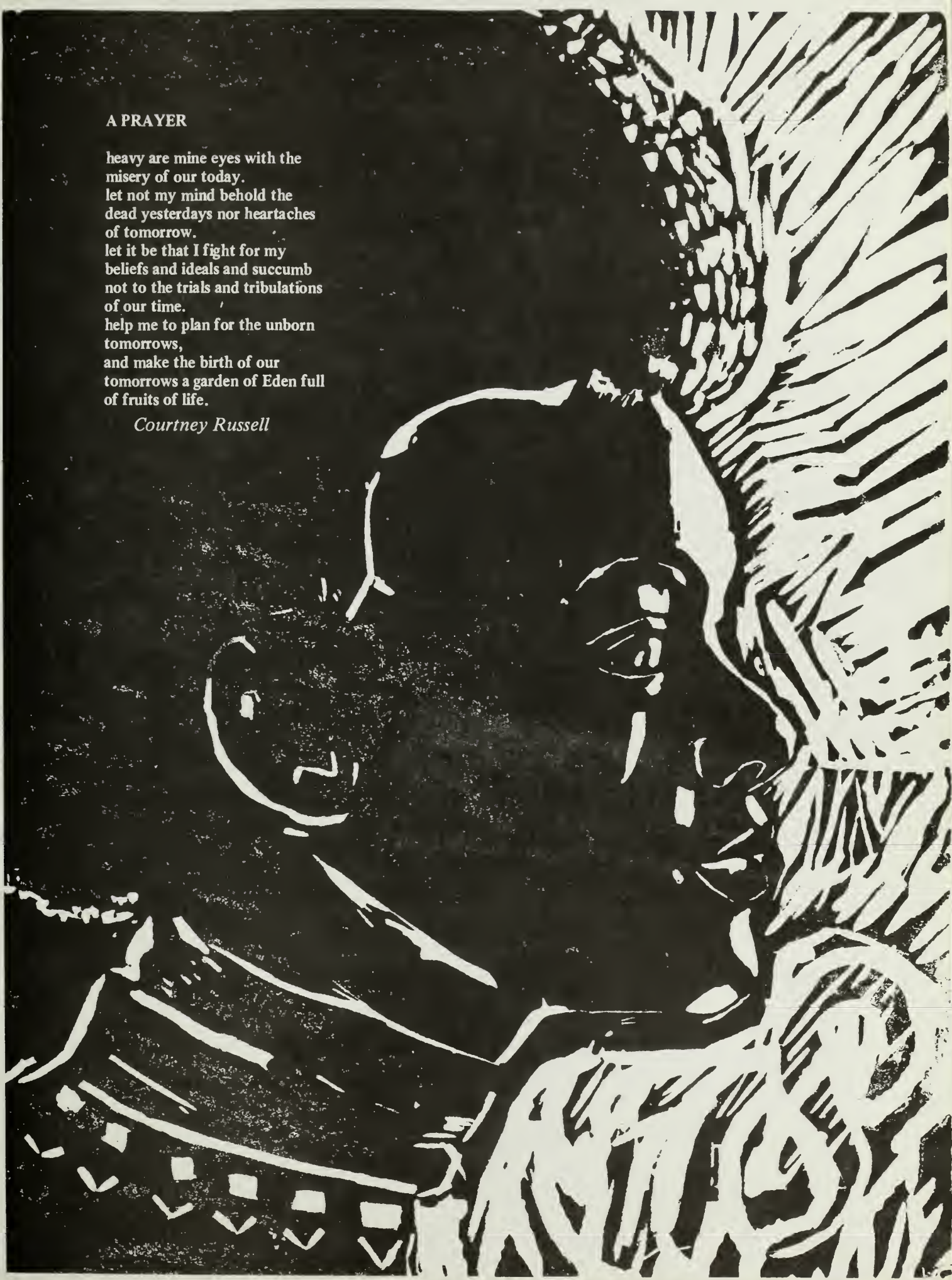
a shift a void
 to be filled
 but still growing bigger and
and i wonder why
 to move for myself decide
 just what is right for me
 to change
 to do good r
 or to be put out
 and know that i'm nothing
and i cry more now
 than i did before
 while my wishes and dreams for home
 come and linger more than before
and i cry more now
 than I did before
dreaming of home
 in the summer

Dee Satterthwaite

A PRAYER

heavy are mine eyes with the
misery of our today.
let not my mind behold the
dead yesterdays nor heartaches
of tomorrow.
let it be that I fight for my
beliefs and ideals and succumb
not to the trials and tribulations
of our time.
help me to plan for the unborn
tomorrows,
and make the birth of our
tomorrows a garden of Eden full
of fruits of life.

Courtney Russell



CONTRIBUTORS

Yvette Battle works as a secretary at Northeastern University's Afro-American Institute. Her previous poems have appeared in **The Onyx**, Black student newspaper at Northeastern. She makes her home in Boston, Mass.

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Juli Malveaux, a Boston University student, is the winner of the "Blacklove" competition by **Essence Magazine** of which she is a regular contributor.

Lester Payne is a Northeastern University student and Poetry Editor of **The Onyx**.

Gregg Powell, a former Northeastern University student, now lives in Texas. His poetry has appeared in **The Onyx**.

John Reavis III has published his work in a number of Canadian periodicals and is presently finishing a work entitled "Children on the Subways With Symbols," to be published by Calders & Boyars -- London.

Courtney Russell is a former Northeastern University student.

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Ted Thomas, a Northeastern University student, is founder and Editor-In-Chief of **The Onyx** and editor of **Black Expressions**.

A percentage of the proceeds from this magazine will be sent to the drought-stricken countries in West Africa.

*In this world you will find that
some people have large eyes, others have
small eyes; and still others have no
eyes at all.*

*You will also find that it is not
important whether or not one's eyes are
large or small, or whether or not one has
eyes at all; only that one is able to see.*

Ted Thomas

